



Mineral-Energy Complex

South Africa's largest centres of material production are in minerals and energy, and these two "sectors" are highly interdependent. For example the mineral, coal, is the mainstay of the electricity-generating industry of the country, while electric energy is in turn indispensable to the gold, platinum and other mines.

No question of "development", in the material sense, in South Africa can be properly addressed without reference to the mineral-energy complex.

The SACP's discussion document "Expanding Democratic Public Control over the Mining Sector" (**attached**) therefore has implications beyond the mining sector, and beyond the energy sector. This document is a window on the way that development - the dialectical, dynamic, unity-and-struggle-of-opposites otherwise called the class struggle, and its relationship with the state, are playing out before our eyes.

It is a remarkable document. Not only is it a theoretical masterpiece, helping us to see clearly what is what and who is who, but it also stands comparison with the best of journalism, because it illuminates the South African

situation so well, as a narrative.

One of the quotations given in the document is from Frederick Engels, on nationalisation, as follows:

“the transformation...into state property, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces... The more it [the bourgeois state] proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers – proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head.” ([Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific”, 1880](#)).

The workers in nationalised industries, including teachers, remain proletarians. They sell their labour-power for cash and they have constantly to renegotiate their pay and conditions with an employer who can be as ruthless as any other capitalist.

This is the second last week of the “Development” series. In the remainder of this part we will look at the South African National Planning Commission’s draft National Development Plan.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Expanding Democratic Public Control over the Mining Sector](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).